

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

I am writing to protest your plans to expedite the consolidation of our nation's news media. I believe an informed citizenry is essential for a true democracy.

If we don't have information, we don't have a choice. If only a handful of corporations control the public's access to information, these corporations can control the public.

Consolidation is dangerous. In 1983, approximately 50 corporations controlled the vast majority of all media

(newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations, books, records, movies, videos, wire services and photo agencies.) By 1992, fewer than two dozen corporations owned and operated 90% of mass media. We're now down to six:

AOL/Time Warner, Disney, Bertelsman, Viacom, News Corporation (aka Rupert Murdoch),

and Vivendi Universal. I find that appalling.

It's even more appalling that the FCC is considering measures which would facilitate further

consolidation. The 1996 Telecommunications Act was supposed to inspire competition (though it only moved us closer to monopolization by facilitating mega-mergers--

for instance, the current 7 largest cable owners own 75% of the market), and it was supposed to lower cable rates (which have since risen by 30%).

Don't weaken what restrictions are left. The FCC was organized to protect the public's

access to diverse information, not to protect mega-media corporations' profit margins.

In my opinion, as our country becomes increasingly Orwellian-- the government just granted

itself "Total Information Awareness" via the Homeland Security Bill-- protecting OUR access

to diverse information is critical. I urge you to protect these restrictions:

1. The rule prohibiting ownership of both newspapers and broadcast media in a single market. Worst case scenario: Disney's New York Times.

2. The rule prohibiting the ownership of multiple local TV stations.

3. The dual network rule which prevents one of the four major networks from buying another.

4. The rule limiting the number of TV stations a single company can own: the current limit

prohibits a company from controlling stations that collectively reach 35% of all households

in America.

Don't think you can slip deregulation past the public's notice. We are watching.